

Malcolm's Monday Musings : 27 January 2025

Greetings,

The covering email to last Monday's 'Musings' drew attention to the birthdate (20th January 1669) of Susanna Wesley, the mother of two outstanding Christian leaders of the 18th century, John and Charles Wesley.

The day after tomorrow marks the anniversary of the traditional birthdate (29th January 1499) of Katharina von Bora, the wife of an outstanding Christian leader whose life spanned the late 15th and early 16th centuries, Martin Luther.

Katharina von Bora was certainly no match for Susanna Wesley in terms of siblings. Katharina had only three brothers and perhaps one sister (source: E. Kroker, '*The Mother of the Reformation*', page 8), against Susanna Wesley's (mind-blowing) twenty-four siblings (source: A. Dallimore, '*Susanna Wesley*', page 11).

Yet, as Susanna Wesley, Luther's 'Katie' was an exceptional Christian woman.

Personally, I appreciate her last words before she died at the age of 53, 'I will stick to Christ as a burr to a topcoat' (source: K. Tabb, '*The Runaway Nun*').

That spiritual sentiment was certainly shared by the 19th century poet and hymn writer, Charlotte Elliott—best known for her hymn, '*Just as I am*'. As part of one of her many compositions, Miss Elliott penned the following verses:

Though faith and hope may oft be tried,
I ask not, need not aught beside;
How safe, how calm, how satisfied,
The souls that cling to Thee!

They fear not life's rough storms to brave,
Since Thou art near, and strong to save;
Nor shudder e'en at death's dark wave.
Because they cling to Thee.

(Charlotte Elliott, '*Hours of Sorrow*', 1836, page 133.)

I set out below today's 'Musings' document.

Happy reading.

Yours in our Lord Jesus,

Malcolm

(i) Scripture.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible.

Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

Hebrews 11. 23-29 (King James Version)

(ii) Food for thought.

Moses's refusal and choice: his deliberate change of identity.

'By faith Moses ... refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season ... he had respect unto the recompense of the reward' (Heb. 11. 24-26).

It is clear that Moses does not forfeit his status as the son of Pharaoh's daughter as a result of killing the oppressing Egyptian (Exod. 2. 12). Rather, he 'refuses' ('rejects', 'disowns') his high position first—making the conscious decision to throw in his lot with the despised and oppressed Hebrews.

This Moses does, not only because they are his people ('his brethren', Exod. 2. 11) but, the more so, because they are God's people ('the people of God', Heb. 11. 25). He knows that, by identifying himself with the downtrodden Hebrews, he is necessarily renouncing the status he enjoyed as a member of the royal household. But he prefers to be known as a son of Abraham than the son of Pharaoh's daughter!

The world (with its honours, pleasures and wealth ... its power and position ... its pomp and prestige) lies (so to speak) at his feet and he tramples on it.

But what kind of man, we may well ask, would 'choose' hardship in preference to comfort ... reproach in preference to honour ... poverty in preference to treasure ... shame in preference to fame ... the slave camp of Goshen in preference to the palace of Pharaoh ... the enduring of affliction in preference to the enjoyment of untold pleasure?

In the eyes of the world, only a madman, in some act of supreme folly, would ever make such a decision. But Moses was certainly no fool. It was simply that his faith laid hold on the realities of another world.

Note the following three pertinent quotations:

(i) 'Moses knew he had a mission to perform for God and for his people: "he supposed that his brethren understood that God was granting them deliverance through him" (Acts 7. 25). The people of Israel did not understand his mission, but he did ... From the worldly standpoint, he was sacrificing everything for nothing. But from the spiritual standpoint, he was sacrificing nothing for everything: "he was looking to the reward" (Heb. 11. 26).'

(J. MacArthur Jr, 'Hebrews: New Testament Commentary', pages 349-350.)

(ii) Moses 'chose the imperishable ... saw the invisible ... did the impossible'.

(Vance Havner, 'Day by Day with Vance Havner' page 36.)

(iii) 'Moses refused the treasures in Egypt; Christ refused the whole world'.

(J. N. Darby, 'Notes from Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews', Collected Writings, volume 27, page 359.)

'God is love. In this was manifested the love of God toward us ...' (1 John 4. 8-9).

Love is 'an eternal attribute of God ... with a biblical understanding of the Trinity, we can say that God did not create in order to be loved but rather created out of the overflow of the perfect love that had always existed among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit'.

(Kevin DeYoung, 'The Most Important Doctrine Many Never Think About', accessed at ... <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/most-important-doctrine-many-never/>.)

'They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading' (Neh. 8. 8).

'In Nehemiah 8, Ezra begins a seven-day Bible conference (Neh. 8. 18).

'He carefully reads "the Law" to the assembled crowd (Neh. 8. 3). The Levites join in; they "instructed the people in the Law ... They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read" (Neh. 8. 7–8 NIV).

'The expression "making it clear" could be rendered "translating it"; after all, the Law was written in Hebrew, and by this time most of the people spoke Aramaic. The Bible had become a closed book to them. Whether through translation or exposition or both, the people are understanding it again.

'Joy dawns "because they now understood the words that had been made known to them" (Neh. 8. 12). Whether under the old covenant or the new, nothing is more important for the growth and maturity of God's people than a heart hungry to read and understand what God says, and people to make it plain'.

(D. A. Carson, 'For the Love of God', Volume 2, meditation for 18 January.)

The deity of Christ.

'Even if the early Church had never applied the title 'God' to Jesus, His deity would still be apparent in His being:

- (i) the object of human and angelic worship and of saving faith;
- (ii) the exerciser of exclusively divine functions such as (a) creatorial agency, (b) the forgiveness of sins, and (c) the final judgment;
- (iii) the addressee in petitionary prayer;
- (iv) the possessor of all divine attributes;
- (v) the bearer of numerous titles used of Jehovah in the Old Testament; and
- (vi) the co-author of divine blessing.

'Faith in the deity of Christ does not rest on the evidence or validity of a series of 'proof-texts' in which Jesus may receive the title 'God' but on the general testimony of the New Testament corroborated at the bar of personal experience'.

(M J. Harris, 'Titus 2. 13 and the Deity of Christ', in 'Pauline Studies: Essays Presented to F. F. Bruce', page 271.)

[Further evidence, together with scriptural references, can be found in pages 3-5 of 'The Holy Trinity' document attached to the Monday Musings dated 9 November 2020—accessible at <https://voicesforchrist.org/writings/148>.]

'He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant' (Isa. 53. 2).

'The Messiah would not suddenly appear on earth full grown as had Adam or as some in Israel apparently expected the Messiah to come (John 7. 27).

'In words similar to those he had used to describe John the Baptist as a child, Luke provides a brief summary of the growth and development of Jesus from His birth to His twelfth year: 'The child grew and became strong, being filled (continuously, day by day) with wisdom, and the grace (favour) of God was upon Him' (Luke 2. 40 lit.; cf. Luke 1. 80).

'Luke further records Jesus' continued growth into manhood until He emerged into the public eye at the time of His baptism: 'Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man', (Luke 2. 52).

'Our Lord's advance in wisdom kept pace with His physical development. His was a real and perfect humanity and His growth was therefore orderly and "seasonable" in every way. "At each stage He was perfect for that stage" (A Plummer, 'The Gospel according to S. Luke', page 79). "As a tender plant", then, this "blessed" Man brought forth "his fruit in his season" (Psa. 1. 3)'.

('Christ Foreshadowed', Precious Seed Publications, page 295; reproduced with kind permission.)

'Elijah ... prayed' (Jam. 5. 17).

'Elijah prays:

- (i) for life in 1 Kings 17. 20–21,
- (ii) for fire in 1 Kings 18. 36–37,
- (iii) for rain in 1 Kings 18. 42, and ...

(iv) for dismissal in 1 Kings 19. 4.

'Elijah has no power to produce any of these changes ... He can only confess his helplessness; that is, he can only pray'.

(D. R. Davis, 'The Wisdom and the Folly', 2003, page 248.)

Hezekiah's rubbish/garbage collection.

(i) Hezekiah's instruction given:

"Hear me, Levites! Now consecrate yourselves, and consecrate the house of the Lord, the God of your fathers, and carry out the filth from the Holy Place' (2 Chron. 29. 5).

(ii) Hezekiah's instruction obeyed:

'The priests went into the inner part of the house of the Lord to cleanse it, and they brought out all the uncleanness that they found in the temple of the LORD into the court of the house of the Lord. And the Levites took it and carried it out to the brook Kidron' (2 Chron. 29. 16).

'Delivered for our offences' (Rom. 4. 25).

'The innocent is taking the place of the guilty, in order that the guilty might be treated as the innocent.

This is underlined by the nature of the charges brought against Jesus. They were "blasphemy" in the religious court (a capital offence) and "treason" in the civil court (also a capital offence). He was found "not guilty" on each count. Yet He was executed ... The crimes are not His. Whose crimes, then, are they?

'Blasphemy and treason are the two crimes on our charge sheet in the judgment court of God. We have "blasphemed" against God by making ourselves the centre of our world and the lord of our own life. We have committed "treason" against God's rightful authority by refusing His will. That was what Adam did. It is what we also have done.

'Jesus has been found guilty and condemned for our crimes'.

(A. Begg and S. B. Ferguson, 'Name Above All Names', pages 126-127.)

Sin, death and judgment.

'The very things that would be my ruin—death and judgment—are the very things that have saved me; for Christ has borne them for me. The Red Sea was death and judgment to the Egyptians, but it saved the Israelites ...

'God would slight the blood of His own Son if He imputed sin to me'.

(J. N. Darby, 'On Hebrews 2', The Christian Friend, 1884, page 115.)

'He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new' (Rev. 21. 5).

'What began in Genesis is brought to completion in Revelation:

(i) Heavens and earth created (Gen. 1. 1); new heavens and earth (Rev. 21. 1).

(ii) Sun created (Gen. 1. 16); no need of the sun (Rev. 21. 23).

(iii) The night established (Gen. 1. 5); no night there (Rev. 22. 5).

(iv) The seas created (Gen. 1. 10); no more seas (Rev. 21. 1).

(v) The curse announced (Gen. 3. 14-17); no more curse (Rev. 22. 3).

(vi) Death enters history (Gen. 3. 19); no more death (Rev. 21. 4).

(vii) Man driven from the tree (Gen. 3. 24); man restored to paradise (Rev. 22. 14).

(viii) Sorrow and pain begin (Gen. 3. 17); no more tears or pain (Rev. 21. 4)'.
(W. Wiersbe, 'Be Victorious', page 145.)

Only two classes: 'them that are saved ... them that are lost' (2 Cor. 2. 15; 4. 3).

'Following the sinking of the Titanic, the White Star office in Liverpool, England, placed a large board on either side of the main entrance. On one they printed in large letters, "KNOWN TO BE SAVED", and on the other, "KNOWN TO BE LOST".

'When the Titanic's voyage began, there were three classes of passengers ('First', 'Second' and 'Third'), but, when it ended, the number was reduced to only two—those who were saved by the rescue boats and those who were lost in the deep waters'.

(M. Adams, 'The Titanic's Last Hero', page 23.)

Contrasting responses to the preaching of God's message.

(i) 'They laughed them to scorn and mocked them. However, some ... humbled themselves and came' (2 Chron. 30. 10-11).

(ii) 'The Jews ... began to contradict what was spoken by Paul, reviling him. But ... the Gentiles ... were glad, and glorified the word of the Lord' (Acts 13. 45, 48).

(iii) 'Some mocked. But ... some ... believed' (Acts 17. 32, 34).

(iii) Go on, smile.

An illusionist was working on a cruise ship in the Mediterranean. The audience would be different each week, so the illusionist would do the same tricks over and over again.

There was only one problem. The captain's parrot Scooter saw the shows every week and began to understand what the entertainer did in every trick.

Once he understood that, he started shouting in the middle of the show: 'It's not the same hat', 'He's hiding the flowers under the table', 'Why are all the cards the Ace of Spades?' and so on.

The illusionist was furious but he couldn't do anything because Scooter was the captain's parrot.

One day, in the middle of the sea, the ship had an accident and sank.

The illusionist found himself clinging to a piece of a broken lifeboat ... with Scooter the parrot perched on the top.



They stared at each other with neither saying a word. This went on for several hours.

Finally, after three hours, the parrot broke the silence: 'Okay, I give up', he squawked,

'Where have you hidden the ship?'